



**Easter Seals
Crossroads**
dis|ability services
Our emphasis is on *ability*.

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Indiana's deaf and hard-of-hearing children to benefit from \$1.5 million Lilly Endowment Inc. grant to Easter Seals Crossroads

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded a \$1.5 million, three-year grant to Easter Seals Crossroads to create the Easter Seals Crossroads Speech and Hearing Resource Center. Working in partnership with the statewide nonprofit organization Hear Indiana, the center will provide speech therapy, audiology, information and referral, school outreach, and counseling for parents of children who are deaf or have a hearing loss. The center, which will be located at Easter Seals Crossroads' main campus at 4740 Kingway Drive in Indianapolis, is expected to open in late summer.

Easter Seals and Hear Indiana officials said the need for such a center is great. Every 36 hours, a baby in Indiana is born unable to hear. In other words, 200 to 250 new children and their families each year face significant challenges and important choices regarding hearing loss and how to address it. Cumulatively, there are at least 3,300 children in the state of Indiana dealing with deafness or some degree of hearing loss. What's more, with frequent exposure to high-volume headphones, ear buds, loudspeakers, white noise and more, one in four teens has a hearing loss.

The good news is, with early diagnosis and effective treatment, children and their families have more choices than ever when it comes to addressing deafness and hearing loss.

Patrick Sandy, Easter Seals Crossroads' president and CEO, said, "Crossroads has a long history of offering choices to individuals with disabilities and their families. This grant helps us expand on our ability to help children and families dealing with deafness or hearing loss."

"With early identification and appropriate support, children who are deaf and hard of hearing can make excellent progress in school and in life," said Gayla Hutsell Guignard, director of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education. "Early-intervention from well-trained, skilled providers is essential, and this grant and resulting center will help close the gap we're seeing today in terms of the availability of providers."

Hutsell Guignard said that because early childhood is such a critical period for language learning, it is essential that parents have access to comprehensive information as soon as a hearing loss has been diagnosed. It is equally important that children with hearing loss are enrolled in early intervention at the earliest possible moment.

Scott Fogo, Easter Seals Crossroads' vice president of clinical services said the new center means new options for Indiana families and their children.

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“This grant allows Crossroads to better serve children whose families desire listening and spoken-language proficiency,” said Fogo. “We’ll be able to offer the most-current hearing technology and the comprehensive services to complement that technology – including information, referrals and support. We’ll also be in a better position to provide information and consulting to schools around the state and to better assist clients of our existing Easter Seals Crossroads’ Deaf Community Services.”

Naomi Horton, executive director of Hear Indiana, said the new center is focused on helping parents choose the option that’s best for their family and their child.

“When appropriate therapies are provided by six months of age, children who are deaf or hard of hearing have an excellent chance of achieving age-appropriate speech, language and literacy outcomes,” said Horton. “The cost of comprehensive listening and spoken-language services can be quite formidable, and we want to ensure that Hoosier families from all walks of life have equal access to comprehensive information and a full range of options. That way, they can choose the communications methodology that’s best for them and their child.”

About Easter Seals Crossroads

For more than 75 years, Easter Seals Crossroads has provided services to the central Indiana community to improve the lives of children and adults with special needs, disabilities or challenges by promoting inclusion, independence and dignity. Through physical, occupational and speech-language therapies, our licensed, experienced therapists are able to help children with special needs and their families experience the greatest level of growth and independence possible. Easter Seals Crossroads offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals. More information can be found at: www.eastersealscrossroads.org

Deaf Community Services (DCS), a division of Easter Seals Crossroads provides recognition of and language accessibility to the deaf community. Services include interpreting and case management. DCS arranges American Sign Language interpreters to facilitate communications between deaf/hard-of-hearing clients and hearing persons. DCS also helps with advocacy, community education and outreach, and information and referrals

About Hear Indiana

For 40 years, Hear Indiana has empowered and supported families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The nonprofit organization provides hope, education, advocacy, and resources to hundreds of families throughout the state of Indiana. Hear Indiana has the expertise to provide specialized speech, language and audiological services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. More information can be found at: www.hearindiana.org.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly and his two sons, Eli and J.K. Jr., with gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical company. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. More information can be found at www.lillyendowment.org.